

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, and 7-15 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 8 and 10 without introducing any new matter, and cancels Claims 4 and 6 without prejudice or disclaimer.

The outstanding Office Action rejected Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Higuma (Technical Report of IEICE, March 2002). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Higuma (Technical Report of IEICE, March 2002). Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 were allowed and Claims 8, 10, 12 and 14 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, allowable dependent Claim 8 is rewritten in independent form, to incorporate all the features of independent Claim 4. In addition, allowable dependent Claim 10 is rewritten to be in independent form, to recite all the features of independent Claim 4 and intervening Claim 6. Consequently, Claims 4 and 6 are cancelled. The application is therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-3, 5, 7-15 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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